

Guide *for* *the* Daily Office

*For the Week of the Second Sunday after the Epiphany
January 19-January 25, 2025*



Private Prayers *for Before & After the Office*

Below are adaptations of the traditional prayers that were prayed before praying the Divine Office. If desired, they may be privately used before and after prayer.

Before the Office

Open, O Lord, my mouth to bless your holy Name; cleanse also my heart from all vain and wandering thoughts; enlighten my understanding; kindle my affections; that I may say this Office worthily, with attention and devotion, and so be fit to be heard in the presence of your divine Majesty. Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

The Prayer of St. Gertrude

O Lord, in union with that divine intention by which you yourself on earth did render your praises to God, I desire to offer this my Office of prayer unto you.

The Our Father & the Apostles' Creed may then be prayed silently

After the Office

To God Most Holy, in his divine Majesty of Trinity in Unity; To Jesus Christ, our Lord and God made man and crucified for us; To blessed Mary Ever-Virgin, from whose glorious purity he took flesh; And to the entire Company of the Saints of God in heaven; Be praise, honour, power, and glory, from every creature on earth: And likewise to us may there be full remission of all our sins: throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The Our Father may be prayed silently

O most gracious Jesus, I give thanks unto you with my whole heart. Be merciful to me. I offer this act of worship to your Divine Heart, that you would correct whatsoever is amiss, and supply whatever is lacking, to the praise and glory of your most holy Name, and to that of your most blessed Mother; for the salvation of my soul and for that of all your Church. Amen.

How-to use *this* Guide

This Guide is meant to help those who would like to pray the daily office. With this guide, all that you need to pray the Daily Office is a 1979 Book of Common Prayer! If you don't have one, they are available for purchase online, or for free as a PDF by searching "1979 Book of Common Prayer PDF."

There are two sections to this guide:

1. The Ordinary
2. The Propers

The Ordinary is at the beginning, and tells you the order of the typical prayers and readings for Morning and Evening Prayer every day. Page numbers are provided for convenience. Follow this for the structure of Morning & Evening Prayer.

The Propers are the readings and prayers appointed for each individual day, along with any saints being celebrated that day. This section will give you all the readings and prayers needed to pray the office.

The **Ordinary** *for* **Morning Prayer**

Introduction *Read the introduction found in the Ordinary*

Opening Sentence *Choose one of the acclamations for “At any time”* pg. 78

Invitatory *“Lord, open our lips, etc.”* pg. 80

Antiphon *use the antiphon under “On other Sundays and weekdays”* pg. 81

Venite or Jubilate pg. 82

Antiphon *repeat the antiphon*

Psalter *Read the Psalms appointed for Morning Prayer responsively by verse, pausing at the asterisk and ending with “Glory to the Father . . .”*

First Lesson *Read the first reading appointed*

First Canticle

Mondays 9: The First Song of Isaiah pg. 86

Tuesdays 13: A Song of Praise pg. 90

Wednesdays 11: The Third Song of Isaiah pg. 87

Thursday 8: The Song of Moses pg. 85

Friday 10: The Second Song of Isaiah pg. 86

Saturday 12: A Song of Creation pg. 88

Sundays & Major Feasts 16: The Song of Zechariah pg. 92

Second Lesson *Read the first reading appointed*

Second Canticle

Mondays 19: The Song of the Redeemed pg. 94

Tuesdays 18: A Song to the Lamb pg. 93

Wednesdays 16: The Song of Zechariah pg. 92

Thursday 20: Glory to God pg. 94

Friday 18: A Song to the Lamb pg. 93

Saturday 19: The Song of the Redeemed pg. 94

<i>Sundays & Major Feasts</i> 21: You are God	pg. 95
[Third Lesson <i>if there is a third lesson appointed, read it here</i>]	
Apostles' Creed	pg. 96
Lord's Prayer	pg. 97
Suffrages <i>Ordinarily, use Suffrage A. On Sundays & Major feast days, use Suffrage B.</i>	pg. 97-8
Collect(s) of the Day <i>Read the appointed collects</i>	
Collect of the Week	
<i>Mondays</i> A Collect for the Renewal of Life	pg. 99
<i>Tuesdays</i> A Collect for Peace	pg. 99
<i>Wednesdays</i> A Collect for Grace	pg. 100
<i>Thursday</i> A Collect for Guidance	pg. 100
<i>Friday</i> A Collect for Fridays	pg. 99
<i>Saturday</i> A Collect for Saturdays	pg. 99
<i>Sundays</i> A Collect for Sundays	pg. 98
Prayer for Mission <i>Choose one of the three prayers for mission</i>	pg. 100-1
Intercessions & Thanksgivings <i>Add as appointed</i>	
Silence <i>Intercessions/thanksgivings may be added, silently or aloud</i>	
[The General Thanksgiving <i>may be added here</i>]	pg. 101
A Prayer of St. Chrysostom	pg. 102
Concluding Versicle and Sentence	pg. 102

The **Ordinary** *for* **Evening Prayer**

Introduction *Read the introduction found in the Ordinary*

Opening Sentence *Choose one of the opening sentences* pg. 115-16

Confession of Sin *The confession of sin is said together in unison* pg. 116

Prayer for Forgiveness *all but priests say “us” instead of “you”* pg. 117

Invitatory *“O God, make speed to save us, etc.”* pg. 117

Phos Hilaron *Say together the “O Gracious Light”* pg. 118

Psalter *Read the Psalms appointed for Evening Prayer responsively by verse, pausing at the asterisk and ending with the “Glory to the Father . . .”*

The First Lesson *Read the first reading appointed*

The First Canticle

Mondays 8: The Song of Moses pg. 85

Tuesdays 10: The Second Song of Isaiah pg. 86

Wednesdays 12: A Song of Creation pg. 88

Thursday 11: The Third Song of Isaiah pg. 87

Friday 13: A Song of Praise pg. 90

Saturday 9: The First Song of Isaiah pg. 86

Sundays & Major Feasts The Song of Mary (*Magnificat*) pg. 119

The Second Lesson *Read the first reading appointed*

Second Canticle

Mondays-Saturdays The Song of Mary *Magnificat* pg. 119

Sundays & Major Feasts The Song of Simeon *Nunc dimittis* pg. 120

[**The Third Lesson** *if there is a third lesson appointed, read it here*]

Apostles’ Creed pg. 120

Lord’s Prayer pg. 121

Suffrages *If there is a celebration of a saint, use Suffrage B, inserting “[their name] & the Blessed Virgin Mary” in the last petition before “and all your saints”. If not, Suffrage A.* pg.121-2

The Collect(s) of the Day *Read the appointed collects*

The Collect of the Week

Mondays A Collect for Peace pg. 123

Tuesdays A Collect for Aid against Perils pg. 123

Wednesdays A Collect for Protection pg. 124

Thursday A Collect for the Presence of Christ pg. 124

Friday A Collect for Fridays pg. 123

Saturday A Collect for Saturdays pg. 123

Sundays A Collect for Sundays pg. 123

Prayer for Mission *Choose one of the three prayers for mission* pg. 100-1

Intercessions & Thanksgivings *Add as appointed*

Silence *Personal intercessions/thanksgivings may be added*

The General Thanksgiving pg. 125

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom pg. 126

Concluding Versicle and Sentence pg. 126

The Angelus

Traditionally, the Angelus is prayed once in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. For those who are comfortable, it may be prayed on its own or before or after the office.

V. The Angel of the Lord announced unto Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners; Now and at the hour of our death. *Amen.*

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it unto me according to thy Word.

Hail Mary . . .

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary . . .

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Pour thy grace into our hearts, O Lord, that we who have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ, announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary, may by his † cross and passion be brought to the glory of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*



Sunday, Jan 19 | The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

The Psalter

In Morning Prayer, Psalm 148, 149, 150 (*BCP page 805*)

In Evening Prayer, Psalm 114, 115 (*BCP page 756*)

The First Reading for Morning Prayer (*Isaiah 43:14-44:5*)

Reader A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I will send to Babylon and break down all the bars, and the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentation. I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down; they cannot rise; they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise. Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob; but you have been weary of me, O Israel! You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings or wearied you with frankincense. You have not bought me sweet cane with money or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. Rather, you have burdened me with your sins; you have wearied me with your iniquities. I alone am the one who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. Accuse me; let us go to trial; set forth your case, so that you may be proved right. Your first ancestor sinned, and your mediators rebelled against me. Therefore I profaned the princes of the sanctuary; I delivered Jacob to utter destruction and Israel to reviling. But now hear,

O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen! Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you in the womb and will help you: Do not fear, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your descendants and my blessing on your offspring. They shall spring up like a green tamarisk, like willows by flowing streams. This one will say, "I am the Lord's"; another will be called by the name of Jacob; yet another will write on the hand, "The Lord's," and adopt the name of Israel.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Second Reading for Morning Prayer (*Hebrews 6:17-7:10*)

Reader A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

In the same way, when God desired to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it by an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God would prove false, we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. This "Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham as he was returning from defeating the kings and blessed him," and to him Abraham apportioned "one-tenth of everything." His name, in the first place, means "king of righteousness"; next, he is also king of Salem, that is, "king of peace." Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. See how great he is! Even Abraham the patriarch gave him a tenth of the spoils. And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to collect tithes from the people, that is, from their kindred, though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man, who does not belong to their ancestry, collected tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had received the promises. It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the

superior. In the one case, tithes are received by those who are mortal; in the other, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The First Reading for Evening Prayer (*John 4:27-42*)

Reader A reading from the Gospel according to St. John

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Second Reading for Evening Prayer

A Reading from a hymn of Ephrem of Syria

I have invited you, Lord, to a wedding feast of song,
but the wine – the utterance of praise – at our feast has failed.
You are the guest who filled the jars with good wine,
fill my mouth with your praise.

The wine that was in the jars was akin and related to
this eloquent Wine that gives birth to praise,
seeing that wine too gave birth to praise
from those who drank it and beheld the wonder.

You who are so just, if at a wedding feast not your own
you filled six jars with good wine,
do you at this wedding feast fill, not the jars,
but the ten thousand ears with its sweetness.

Jesus, you were invited to a wedding feast of others,
here is your own pure and fair wedding feast:
gladden your rejuvenated people,
for your guests too, O Lord, need your songs:
let your harp utter.

The soul is your bride, the body your bridal chamber,
your guests are the senses and the thoughts.
And if a single body is a wedding feast for you,
how great is your banquet for the whole Church!

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The Collect

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany (*from the Book of Common Prayer, pg. 215*)

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine
with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and

obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*



Monday, Jan 20 | Fabian, *Bishop and Martyr*, 250

Monday of the Second Week after Epiphany

Introduction

In 236, an assembly was held at Rome to elect a pope as successor to Antherus. In the throng was Fabian, a layman from the countryside of another part of Italy. Suddenly, according to the historian Eusebius, a dove flew over the crowd and lighted on Fabian's head. In spite of the fact that he was both a total stranger and not even a candidate for election, the people unanimously chose Fabian to be pope, shouting, "He is worthy! He is worthy!" Fabian was ordained to the episcopate without opposition. During his fourteen years as pontiff, Fabian made numerous administrative reforms. He developed the parochial structure of the Church in Rome, and established the custom of venerating martyrs at their shrines in the catacombs. He also appointed seven deacons and seven sub-deacons to write the lives of the martyrs, so that their deeds would not be forgotten in times to come. In the year 250, the Emperor Decius ordered everyone within the Roman Empire to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods and for the welfare of the emperor. The refusal of many Christians to do this resulted in a number of them being executed. As the head of his community, Fabian was one of the earliest to be martyred, setting a courageous example for the rest of the church to emulate. Cyprian of Carthage, in a letter to Fabian's successor Cornelius, wrote that Fabian was an incomparable man. "The glory of his death," Cyprian commented, "befitted the purity and holiness of his life." Fabian was buried in the catacombs of Rome, where his grave marker still exists. It is in fragments, but the words "Fabian . . . bishop . . . martyr" remain dimly visible.

The Psalter

In Morning Prayer, Psalm 25 (BCP pg. 614)

In Evening Prayer, Psalm 9, 15 (BCP pg. 593)

The First Reading for Morning Prayer (*Isaiah 44:6-8, 21-23*)

Reader A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Who is like me? Let them proclaim it; let them declare and set it forth before me. Who has announced from of old the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be. Do not fear or be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? You are my witnesses! Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one. Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you, you are my servant; O Israel, do not forget me. I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you. Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob and will be glorified in Israel.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Second Reading for Morning Prayer (*Ephesians 4:1-16*)

Reader A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high, he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown

about by every wind of doctrine by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Third Reading for Morning Prayer

A Reading from the First Epistle of St. Fabian

To all the ministers of the church catholic: We beg it of your love in paternal blessing, that the holy church may now find the good will of your love in all things and obtain the comforts of your favor whenever there is necessity. And as the goodness of your zeal affords us the assurance that we ought to distrust it in nothing, but rather commit those things in all confidence to you as to wise sons of our church; so, small importance being attached to opportune occasions, your virtue ought to exert itself the more strenuously in labors and keep off reproaches by all possible means, and with all zeal. We exhort you also, according to the word of the apostle, to be "steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as you know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." And in another place: "Watch and pray, and stand fast in the faith. Quit you like men, and be strong. Let all things be done with charity. Beware of all who hold a faith and doctrine different from that which the apostles and their successors have held and taught, lest(which may God forbid) going after him you fall into the toils of Satan, and be bound with his fetters. Therefore with most earnest prayers we beg it of your brotherly love, that you may deem it fit to remember our insignificance in your holy prayers, beseeching and entreating the Lord of heaven that we, as well as our holy mother the church of Christ, redeemed with his precious blood, may be delivered from the toils of Satan, who lies in wait for us, and from troublesome and wicked men, and that the word of God may have free course and be glorified, and that the evil doctrine of them, and of all who teach things contrary to the truth, may be overthrown and perish. We beseech you also to

be zealous in praying in your pious supplications, that our God and Lord Jesus Christ, who will have all men to be saved, and no one to perish, may, by his vast omnipotence, cause their hearts to turn again to sound doctrine and to the catholic faith, in order that they may be recovered from the toils of the devil who are held captive by him, and be united with the children of our mother the church. Be mindful also of your brethren, and have pity upon them, and labor for them by all means in your power, that they be not lost, but be saved to the Lord by your prayers and other efforts of your goodness. So act therefore in these matters that you may prove yourselves obedient and faithful children of the holy church of God, and that you may obtain the recompense of reward. Let every one of you, sustained by this apostolic representation, act according to his strength, and study in brotherly love and in godly piety to keep his own manners correct, and to help each other, and to abide in charity, and to keep himself in the will of God unceasingly, in order that we may praise the Lord together, and give him thanks always without wearying. Farewell in the Lord, dearly beloved, and with the Lord's help strive to fulfill to the best of your ability the things before mentioned.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The First Reading for Evening Prayer (*Mark 3:7-19a*)

Reader A reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark

Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed him; hearing all that he was doing, they came to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon. He told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him, for he had cured many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him. Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, "You are the Son of God!" But he sternly ordered them not to make him known. He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve to be with him and to be sent out to preach and to have authority to cast out demons. So he appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom

he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder), and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who handed him over.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Second Reading for Evening Prayer

A Reading from *The Light of Christ* by Evelyn Underhill

The mystics keep telling us that the goal of prayer and the goal of our hidden life which should itself become more and more of a prayer, is union with God. We use that phrase often, much too often, to preserve the wholesome sense of its awe-fulness. For what does union with God mean? It is not a nice feeling we get in devout moments. That may or may not be a bi-product of union – probably not. It can never be its substance. Union with God means every bit of our human nature transfigured in Christ, woven up into his creative life and activity, absorbed into his redeeming purpose, heart, soul, mind and strength. Each time it happens it means that one of God's creatures has achieved its destiny. And if men and women want to know what this means in terms of human nature, what it costs and what it becomes, there is only one way – contemplation of the life of Christ. Then we see that we grow in wisdom and stature not just for our own sakes – just to become spiritual – but that his teaching, healing, life-giving power may possess us and work through us; that we may lose our own lives and find his life, be conformed to the pattern shown in him, conformed to the cross. Those are the rich and costly demands and experiences that lie before us as we stand and look at the Christ-child setting up a standard for both simple and learned, teaching the secrets of life; and what they ask from us on our side and from our prayer is a very great simplicity, self-oblivion, dependence and suppleness, a willingness and readiness to respond to life where it finds us and to wait, to grow and change, not according to our preconceived notions and ideas of pace, but according to the overruling will and pace of God.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The Collect

Fabian (*from Lesser Feasts and Fasts*)

Grant, Almighty God, that in all times of trial and persecution, we might remain steadfast in faith and endurance, according to the example of your servant Fabian, who was faithful even unto death. We ask this for the sake of him who laid down his life for us all, Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*



Tuesday, Jan 21 | Agnes and Cecelia of Rome, Martyrs, 304 & c.230

Tuesday of the Second Week after Epiphany

Introduction

Agnes and Cecilia are two of the most venerated early Christian martyrs, and were both killed during persecutions in Rome. As a young girl around twelve or thirteen years of age, Agnes was denounced as a Christian when she rejected propositions from men who wanted to marry her. She refused to change her mind or to sacrifice to the Roman gods, and so she was tortured and executed. The early fathers of the church praised her courage and chastity and drew upon parallels with her name, which means “pure” in Greek and “lamb” in Latin. Pilgrims still visit Agnes’ tomb and the catacomb surrounding it, beneath the basilica named for her on the Via Nomentana in Rome that Pope Honorius I (625–638) built in her honor to replace an older shrine erected by the Emperor Constantine. On her feast day at the basilica, two lambs are blessed, whose wool is woven into a scarf called the pallium, with which the Pope invests archbishops. Pope Gregory the Great sent such a pallium in 601 to Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury. A representation of the pallium appears on the coat of arms of Archbishops of Canterbury to this day. Cecilia is the patron saint of singers, organ builders, musicians, and poets. According to fifth-century sources, Cecilia was of noble birth and was betrothed to a pagan named Valerian. Cecilia’s witness resulted in the conversion of both Valerian and his brother, Tiburtius. Because of their conversion, the brothers were martyred and, while Cecilia was burying them, she too was arrested. After several failed attempts to put her to death, she died from injuries sustained by the ordeal. The date of her martyrdom is generally believed to be 230. Remembered for the passion with which she sang the praises of God, Cecilia was first depicted in Christian art as a martyr, but, since the fourteenth century, she has often been shown playing the organ, a theme picked up by Raphael in his famous altarpiece for San Giovanni in Monte, Bologna, painted around 1516. Her story has inspired centuries of artistic representations in paintings, sculptures, mosaics, and stained glass. Composers such as Handel, Purcell, Howells, and Britten have written choral works and mass settings in her honor. Many music schools, choral societies, and concert series bear her name.

The Psalter

In Morning Prayer, Psalm 26, 28 (*BCP pg. 615*)

In Evening Prayer, Psalm 36, 39 (*BCP pg. 632, 638*)

The First Reading for Morning Prayer (*Isaiah 44:9-20*)

Reader A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah:

All who make idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit; their witnesses neither see nor know, and so they will be put to shame. Who would fashion a god or cast an image that can do no good? All its devotees shall be put to shame; the artisans, too, are merely human. Let them all assemble; let them stand up; they shall be terrified; they shall all be put to shame. The blacksmith works it with a tool over the coals, shaping it with hammers and forging it with his strong arm; he becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. The carpenter stretches a line, marks it out with a stylus, fashions it with planes, and marks it with a compass; he makes it in human form, with human beauty, to be set up in a shrine. He cuts down cedars or chooses a holm tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. Then it can be used as fuel. Part of it he takes and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Then he makes a god and worships it, makes it a carved image and bows down before it. Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he roasts meat, eats it, and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, "Ah, I am warm by the fire!" The rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, bows down to it and worships it; he prays to it and says, "Save me, for you are my god!" They do not know, nor do they comprehend, for their eyes are shut, so that they cannot see, and their minds as well, so that they cannot understand. No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. Now shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" He feeds on ashes; a deluded mind has led him astray, and he cannot save himself or say, "Is not this thing in my right hand a fraud?"

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Second Reading for Morning Prayer (*Ephesians 4:17-32*)

Reader A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer walk as the gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. That is not the way you learned Christ! For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus, to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. So then, putting away falsehood, let each of you speak the truth with your neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Those who steal must give up stealing; rather, let them labor, doing good work with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths but only what is good for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Third Reading for Morning Prayer

A Reading from the treatise by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan

Today is the birthday of Saint Agnes. She is said to have suffered martyrdom at the age of twelve. The cruelty which did not spare even so young a child serves only to demonstrate more clearly the power of faith which found witness in one so young. There was not even room in her little body for a wound. Though she could barely receive the sword's point, she could overcome it. Girls of her age tend to wilt under the slightest frown from a parent. Pricked by a needle, they cry as if given a mortal wound. But Agnes showed no fear of the blood-stained hands of her executioners. She was undaunted by the weight of clanging chains. She offered her whole body to the sword of the raging soldiers. Too young to have any acquaintanceship with death, she nevertheless stood ready before it. Dragged against her will to the altar of sacrifice, she was ready to stretch out her hands to Christ in the midst of the flames, making the triumphant sign of Christ the victor on the altars of sacrilege. She was even prepared to put her neck and hands into iron bands – though none of them was small enough to enclose her tiny limbs. Is this a new kind of martyrdom? The girl was too young to be punished, yet old enough to wear a martyr's crown; too young for the contest, but mature enough to gain victory. Her tender years put her at a disadvantage, but she won the trial of virtue. If she had been a bride, she could not have hastened to her wedding night as much as she, a virgin, went with joyful steps to the place of her execution, her head adorned with Christ himself rather than plaits, with a garland woven of virtues instead of flowers. Everyone was weeping, but she herself shed no tears. The crowds marvelled at her spendthrift attitude to life, discarding it untasted, but as if she had lived it to the full. All were astonished that one not yet of legal age, could give testimony to God. It was her final achievement that people believed that she must have received the inner resource for such testimony from God, for humanly speaking it was impossible. They reasoned that what is beyond the power of nature can only come from its creator. You can imagine with what threats the executioner tried to frighten her; what promises were made to seduce her; indeed, how many people there were who would have been prepared to marry her! But she answered, 'It would insult my Spouse if I were to give myself to another. I will be his who first chose me for himself. Executioner, why do you delay? If eyes that I do not want, desire this body, then let it perish.' She stood still, praying, and offered her neck. You

could see the executioner trembling as though he were himself condemned. His right hand began to shake, and his face drained of colour aware of her danger, though the child herself showed no fear. In one victim then, we are given a twofold witness in martyrdom, to modesty and to religion. Agnes preserved her virginity and gained a martyr's crown.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The First Reading for Evening Prayer *(Mark 3:19b-35)*

Reader A reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark

Then he went home, and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." And he called them to him and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered. "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin" —for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit." Then his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you." And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading for Evening Prayer

A Reading from the Letter of Clement of Rome to the Church in Corinth

The blessing of God and the roads that lead to it must be our objective. Search the records of ancient times. Why was our father Abraham blessed? Was it not because of his faith which inspired his life of righteousness and truth? As for Isaac's faith, it was so strong that, assured of the outcome, he willingly allowed himself to be offered in sacrifice. Jacob had the humility to leave his native land on account of his brother, and went and served Laban, and as a reward was given the headship of the twelve tribes of Israel. Honest reflection upon each of these examples will make us realise the magnitude of God's gifts. All the priests and levites who served the altar of God were descended from Jacob. The humanity of the Lord Jesus derived from him. Through the tribe of Judah have issued kings, princes and rulers; while the other tribes are not without their own claim to fame. As God promised Abraham: 'Your descendants shall be as the stars of heaven.' It should be clear that none of these owed their honour and renown because of any inherent right, or in virtue of their achievements or deeds of virtue. No; they owed everything to God's will. So likewise with us, who by his will have been called in Christ Jesus. We are not justified by our wisdom, intelligence, piety, or by any action of ours, however holy, but by faith, the one means by which almighty God has justified us from the beginning. To him be glory for ever and ever. What must we do then? Give up good works? Stop practising Christian love? God forbid! We must be ready and eager for every opportunity to do good, and put our whole heart into it. Even the architect and Lord of the universe rejoices in his works. By his supreme power he set the heavens in their place; by his infinite wisdom he gave them their order. He separated the land from the waters surrounding it and made his own will its firm foundation. By his command he brought to life the beasts that roam the earth. He created the sea and all its living creatures, and then by his power set bounds to it. Finally, with his own holy and undefiled hands, he formed humankind, the highest and most intelligent of his creatures, the copy of his own image. 'Let us make man,' God said, 'in our image and likeness. So God made human beings, male and female he made them.' Then, when he had finished making all his creatures, God gave them his approval and blessing:

'increase and multiply,' he charged them. We must recognise, therefore, that all the righteous have been graced by good works, and that even the Lord himself took delight in the glory his works gave him. With such examples before us, we should feel inspired to obey God's will, and to put all our energies into the business of living a Christian life.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The Collect

Agnes and Cecelia of Rome (*from Lesser Feasts and Fasts*)

Almighty and everlasting God, who chooses those whom the world deems powerless to put the powerful to shame: Grant us so to cherish the memory of your youthful martyrs Agnes and Cecilia, that we might share their pure and steadfast faith in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen.*



Wednesday, Jan 22 | Vincent of Saragossa, Deacon and Martyr, 304

Wednesday of the Second Week after Epiphany

Introduction

Vincent was a native of Huesca, in northeastern Spain, and was ordained as a deacon by Valerius, Bishop of Saragossa, who commissioned him to preach throughout his diocese. In the early years of the fourth century, the fervent Christian community in Spain fell victim to a persecution ordered by the Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Dacian, governor of Spain, arrested both Valerius and his deacon Vincent, and had them imprisoned at Valencia. According to one account, Valerius had a speech impediment, and so Vincent was often called upon to preach for him. When the two prisoners were challenged to renounce their faith, amid threats of torture and death, Vincent said to his bishop, "Father, if you order me, I will speak." Valerius is said to have replied, "Son, as I committed you to dispense the word of God, so I now charge you to answer in vindication of the faith which we defend." The young deacon then told the governor that he and his bishop had no intention of betraying the one true God. The vehemence and enthusiasm of Vincent's defense showed no caution in his defiance of the judges, and Dacian's fury was increased by this exuberance in Christian witness. Valerius was exiled, but the angry Dacian ordered that Vincent be tortured. Although the accounts of his martyrdom have been heavily embellished, Augustine of Hippo writes that Vincent's unshakable faith enabled him to endure grotesque punishments and, finally, death. Vincent's cult spread rapidly throughout the early church, and he was venerated as a bold and outspoken preacher and witness to the truth of the living Christ. He remains an important model for the ministry of deacons not only in doing works of justice and mercy, but also in proclaiming and teaching the truths of the Christian faith to the church and to the world.

The Psalter

In Morning Prayer, Psalm 38 (BCP pg. 636)

In Evening Prayer, Psalm 119:25-48 (BCP pg. 765)

The First Reading for Morning Prayer (*Isaiah 44:24-45:7*)

Reader A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who by myself spread out the earth; who frustrates the omens of soothsayers and makes fools of diviners; who turns back the wise and makes their knowledge foolish; who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the prediction of his messengers; who says of Jerusalem, "It shall be inhabited," and of the cities of Judah, "They shall be rebuilt, and I will raise up their ruins"; who says to the deep, "Be dry— I will dry up your rivers"; who says of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose"; and who says of Jerusalem, "It shall be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him— and the gates shall not be closed: I will go before you and level the mountains; I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron; I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name; I give you a title, though you do not know me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no god. I arm you, though you do not know me, so that they may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe; I the Lord do all these things.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Second Reading for Morning Prayer (*Ephesians 5:1-14*)

Reader A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and impurity of any kind or greed must not even be

mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving. Be sure of this, that no sexually immoral or impure person or one who is greedy (that is, an idolater) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be associated with them, for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Third Reading for Morning Prayer

A Reading from a sermon of St. Augustine

With the eyes of faith we have just beheld an amazing sight, the sight of Vincent conquering far and wide. He conquered through the words he spoke and the punishment he received; he conquered in his confession of faith and in the sufferings he endured; he conquered when they burnt his flesh in the fire and threatened him with drowning; finally, he conquered even as he was being tortured and in death itself. Who ever gave such endurance to one of his soldiers, if not the one who first shed his own blood for them? Of such it is said in the psalms: 'You, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, from my youth.' A great struggle procures great glory: not human or worldly glory, but that which is divine and eternal. It is faith which contends, and when faith contends no one can overcome the flesh. For although our flesh may be torn and mutilated, who can ever perish when we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ? A wealthy person cannot bear to part with his wealth, so how can Christ ever be made to let go of those whom he has bought with his own blood? Vincent's death stands as a tribute not to the glory of man but to the glory of God. From

God comes all endurance. True endurance is holy, religious and upright. Christian endurance is a gift of God. There are thieves who bear torture with great endurance, not yielding, and overcoming their torturer; but afterwards they will be punished by eternal fire. It is the reason for death which distinguishes the endurance of the martyr from that of the hardened criminal. The punishment may be the same, but the reasons are different. Vincent would have used in his prayers the very words from the psalms we have just sung: 'Judge me, O God, defend my cause against an ungodly people.' There was no doubt about his cause because he struggled for truth, for justice, for God, for Christ, for the faith, for the unity of the Church, for undivided love.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The First Reading for Evening Prayer (*Mark 4:1-20*)

Reader A reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark

Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on a path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." And he said, "If you have ears to hear, then hear!" When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything comes in parables, in order that 'they may indeed look but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.' " And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan

immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. But they have no root and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, but the cares of the age and the lure of wealth and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Second Reading for Evening Prayer

A Reading from a treatise On the Lord's Prayer by Cyprian of Carthage

The teacher of peace and the master of unity does not wish us to pray individualistically or selfishly as if we are concerned only about ourselves. We do not say: 'My Father in heaven', or 'Give me today my daily bread.' Nor does anyone pray simply for their own sins to be forgiven, or request that he or she alone be not led into temptation or be delivered from evil. Christian prayer is public and offered for all. When we pray it is not as an individual but as a united people, for we are indeed all one. God, who is the teacher of prayer and peace, taught us peace. He wishes each of us to pray for all, just as he carries us all in himself. What profound mysteries, my dear brothers and sisters, are contained in the Lord's Prayer! How many and how great they are! They are expressed in few words but overflow in an abundance of virtue. Nothing is left out; everything is comprehended in these few petitions. It is a compendium of spiritual teaching. 'This is how you must pray,' says the Lord, 'Our Father in heaven.' The new man or woman who has been born again and restored to God through grace, says 'Father' at the beginning of all prayer because they are already beginning to be his son or daughter. As Scripture says: 'He came among his own and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.' Thus whoever has believed in his name and has been made a child of God should

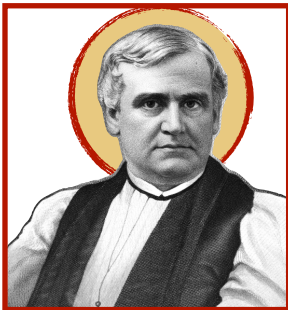
give thanks and acknowledge their adoption, and learn to call God their heavenly Father. None of us would presume to call God our Father had not Christ himself taught us to pray in this way. We should realise then, dearest brothers and sisters, that if we are to call God 'Father', we ought to behave like sons and daughters of God, so that just as we are delighted to have God as our Father, so equally he can take delight in us his children.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The Collects

Vincent of Saragossa (*from Lesser Feasts and Fasts*)

Almighty God, whose deacon Vincent, upheld by you, was neither terrified by threats nor overcome by torments: Strengthen us to endure all adversity with invincible and steadfast faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Thursday, Jan 23 | Phillips Brooks, Bishop, 1893

Thursday of the Second Week after Epiphany

Introduction

Writing about Phillips Brooks in 1930, William Lawrence, who had known him as a young man, began, "Phillips Brooks was a leader of youth . . . His was the spirit of adventure, in thought, life, and faith." To many who know him only as the author of "O little town of Bethlehem," this part of Brooks' life and influence is little known. Born in Boston in 1835, Phillips Brooks graduated from Harvard University and began his career as a teacher at Boston Latin School. He was soon fired, however, and grappled with despair over finding his true vocation. He wrote: "I do not know what will become of me and I do not care much . . . I wish I were fifteen years old again. I believed I might become a stunning man, but somehow or other I do not seem in the way to come to much now." This vocational struggle ultimately led him to offer himself for ordained ministry, and he went to study for the priesthood at Virginia Theological Seminary. Brooks began his ordained ministry in Philadelphia, where his impressive personality and his eloquence immediately attracted attention. After ten years in Philadelphia, he returned to Boston as rector of Trinity Church, which was destroyed in the Boston fire three years later. It is a tribute to Brooks' preaching, character, and leadership that in four years of worshiping in temporary and bare surroundings, the congregation grew and flourished. The new Trinity Church was a daring architectural enterprise for its day, with its altar placed in the center of the chancel, "a symbol of unity; God and man and all God's creation." Brooks was regarded as one of the greatest preachers of his generation, and many of his sermons have continued to stand the test of time. These have passages that still grasp the reader, even though they cannot convey the warmth and vitality which so impressed his hearers. James Bryce wrote, "There was no sign of art about his preaching, no touch of self-consciousness. He spoke to his audience as a man might speak to his friend, pouring forth with swift, yet quiet and seldom impassioned earnestness, the thoughts of his singularly pure and lofty spirit." Brooks died in Boston on January 23, 1893.

The Psalter

In Morning Prayer, Psalm 37: Part I (*BCP pg. 633*)

In Evening Prayer, Psalm 37: Part II (*BCP pg. 634*)

The First Reading for Morning Prayer (*Isaiah 45:5-17*)

Reader A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no god. I arm you, though you do not know me, so that they may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe; I the Lord do all these things. Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation may spring up, and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also; I the Lord have created it. Woe to those who strive with their Maker, earthen vessels with the potter! Does the clay say to the one who fashions it, "What are you making"? or "Your work has no handles"? Woe to anyone who says to a father, "What are you fathering?" or to a woman, "With what are you in labor?" Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel and its Maker: Will you question me about my children or command me concerning the work of my hands? I made the earth and created humankind upon it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host. I have aroused Cyrus in righteousness, and I will make all his paths straight; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward, says the Lord of hosts. Thus says the Lord: The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush and the Sabeans, tall of stature, shall come over to you and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, saying, "God is with you alone, and there is no other; there is no god besides him." Truly, you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, the Savior. All of them are put to shame and confounded; the makers of idols go in disgrace together. But Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded ever again.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Second Reading for Morning Prayer *(Ephesians 5:15-33)*

Reader A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

Be careful, then, how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to one another, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, being subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own flesh, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a great mystery, but I am speaking about Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Third Reading for Morning Prayer

A Reading from *The Light of the World and Other Sermons* by Phillips Brooks

The mystery of man! How Christ believed in that! Oh, my dear friends, he who does not believe in that cannot enter into the full glory of the Incarnation,

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cannot really believe in Christ. Where the mysterious reach of manhood touches the divine, there Christ appears. No mere development of human nature outgoing any other reach that it has made, yet still not incapable of being matched, perhaps of being overcome; not that, not that—unique and separate forever-but possible, because of this same mystery of man in which the least of us has share. To him who knows the hither edges of that mystery in his own life, the story of how in, on, at its depths it should be able to receive and to contain divinity cannot seem incredible; may I not say, cannot seem strange? Men talk about the Christhood, and say, "How strange it is! Strange that Christ should have been—strange that Christ should have suffered for mankind." I cannot see that so we most magnify him or bring him nearest to us. Once feel the mystery of man and is it strange? Once think it possible that God should fill humanity with himself, once see humanity capable of being filled with God, and can you conceive of his not doing it? Must there not be an Incarnation? Do you not instantly begin to search earth for the holy steps? Once think it possible that Christ can, and are you not sure that Christ must give himself for our redemption? So only, when it seems inevitable and natural, does the Christhood become our pattern. Then only does it shine on the mountain-top up toward which we can feel the low lines of our low life aspiring. The Son of God is also the Son of Man. Then in us, the sons of men, there is the key to the secret of his being and his work. Know Christ that you may know yourself. But, oh, also know yourself that you may know Christ! I think to every Christian there come ties when all the strangeness disappears from the divine humanity which stands radiant at the center of his faith. He finds it hard to believe in himself and in his brethren perhaps; but that Christ should and should be Christ appears as the one reasonable, natural, certain thing in all the universe. In him all broken lines unite; in him all scattered sounds are gathered into harmony; and out of the consummate certainty of him, the soul comes back to find the certainty of common things which the lower faith holds, which advancing faith loses, and then finds again in Christ. How every truth attains to its enlargement and reality in this great truth—-that the soul of man carries the highest possibilities within itself, and that what Christ does for it is to kindle and call forth these possibilities to actual experience. We do not understand the church until we understand this truth. Seen in its light the Christian church

is nothing in the world except the promise and prophecy and picture of what the world in its idea is and always has been, and in its completion must visibly become. It is the primary crystallization of humanity.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The First Reading for Evening Prayer (*Mark 4:21-34*)

Reader A reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark

He said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket or under the bed and not on the lampstand? For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. If you have ears to hear, then hear!" And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and it will be added to you. For to those who have, more will be given, and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away." He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle because the harvest has come." He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading for Evening Prayer

A Reading from Centuries of Meditations by Thomas Traherne

Knowing the greatness and sweetness of love, I can never be poor in any estate. How sweet a thing is it as we go or ride, or eat or drink, or converse abroad to remember that one is the heir of the whole world and the friend of God! That one has so great a friend as God is, and that one is exalted infinitely by all his laws! That all the riches and honours in the world are ours in the divine image to be enjoyed! That a man is tenderly beloved of God and always walking in his father's kingdom under his wing, and as the apple of his eye! Verily that God hath done so much for one in his works and laws, and expressed so much love in his word and ways, being as he is divine and infinite, it should make a man to walk above the stars, and seat him in the bosom of men and angels. It should always fill him with joy and triumph, and lift him up above crowns and empires. That a man is beloved of God, should melt him all into esteem and holy veneration. It should make him so courageous as an angel of God. It should make him delight in calamities and distresses for God's sake. By giving me all things else, he hath made even afflictions themselves my treasures. The sharpest trials are the finest furbishing. The most tempestuous weather is the best seedtime. A Christian is an oak flourishing in winter. God hath so magnified and glorified his servant, and exalted him so highly in his eternal bosom, that no other joy should be able to move us but that alone. All sorrows should appear but shadows, beside that of his absence, and all the greatness of riches and estates swallowed up in the light of his favour. Incredible goodness lies in his love. And it should be joy enough to us to contemplate and possess it. He is poor whom God hates: 'tis a true proverb. And besides that, we should so love him that the joy alone of approving ourselves to him, and making ourselves amiable and beautiful before him should be a continual feast, were we starving. A beloved cannot feel hunger in the presence of his beloved. Where martyrdom is pleasant, what can be distasteful. To fight, to famish, to die for one's beloved, especially with one's beloved, and in his excellent company, unless it be for his trouble, is truly delightful. God is always present, and always seeth us.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The Collects

Phillips Brooks (*from Lesser Feasts and Fasts*)

Everlasting God, who implants your living Word in the minds and on the lips of all who proclaim your truth: Grant that we, like your pastor and preacher Phillips Brooks, might proclaim your Gospel in our own generation with grace and power. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*



Friday, Jan 24 | Florence Li Tim-Oi, Priest, 1992

Friday of the Second Week after Epiphany

Introduction

Florence Li Tim-Oi was the first woman ordained as a priest in the Anglican Communion. Named by her father “much beloved daughter,” Li Tim-Oi was born in Hong Kong in 1907. When she was baptized as a student, she chose the name of Florence in honor of Florence Nightingale. Florence studied at Union Theological College in Guangzhou (Canton). In 1938, upon graduation, she served as a lay worker, first in Kowloon and then in nearby Macao. In May 1941 Florence was ordained as a deaconess. Some months later, Hong Kong fell to Japanese invaders, and priests could not travel to Macao to celebrate the Eucharist. Despite this setback, Florence continued her ministry. Her work came to the attention of Bishop Ronald Hall of Hong Kong, who decided that “God’s work would reap better results if she had the proper title” of priest. On January 25, 1944, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, Bishop Hall ordained her as a priest. When World War II came to an end, Florence Li Tim-Oi’s ordination became the subject of much controversy. She made the personal decision not to exercise her priesthood until it was acknowledged by the wider Anglican Communion. Undeterred, she continued to minister with great faithfulness, and in 1947 was appointed rector of St. Barnabas Church in Hepu where, on Bishop Hall’s instructions, she was still to be called priest. When the Communists came to power in China in 1949, Florence undertook theological studies in Beijing to further understand the implications of the Three-Self Movement (self-rule, self-support, and self-propagation) which now determined the life of the churches. She then moved to Guangzhou to teach and to serve at the Cathedral of Our Savior. However, for sixteen years during the Cultural Revolution, from 1958 onwards, all churches were closed. Florence was forced to work first on a farm and then in a factory. Accused of counterrevolutionary activity, she was required to undergo political reeducation. Finally, in 1974, she was allowed to retire from her work in the factory. In 1979 the churches reopened, and Florence resumed her public ministry. Then, two years later, she was allowed to visit family members living in Canada. While there, to her great joy, she was

licensed as a priest in the Diocese of Montreal and later in the Diocese of Toronto, where she finally settled until her death on February 26, 1992.

The Psalter

In Morning Prayer, Psalm 31 (*BCP pg. 599*)

In Evening Prayer, Psalm 35 (*BCP pg. 610*)

The First Reading for Morning Prayer (*Isaiah 45:18-25*)

Reader A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos; he formed it to be inhabited!): I am the Lord, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, “Seek me in chaos.” I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right. Assemble yourselves and come together; draw near, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge— those who carry about their wooden idols and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. Declare and present your case; take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? There is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is no one besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: “To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; all who were incensed against him shall come to him and be ashamed. In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading for Morning Prayer (*Ephesians 6:1-9*)

Reader A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—this is the first commandment with a promise—“so that it may be

well with you and you may live long on the earth.” And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ, not with a slavery performed merely for looks, to please people, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the soul. Render service with enthusiasm, as for the Lord and not for humans, knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are enslaved or free. And, masters, do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Lord in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Third Reading for Morning Prayer

A Reading from a sermon for the feast of Florence Li Tim-Oi by Diana D. Akiyama, Episcopal Bishop of Western Oregon

Tonight we gather to remember and celebrate the ministry of the reverend Florence Li Tim-Oi; a woman most of us have never met personally, but whose name reminds us of the light and promise of our Christian faith in a broken and sinful world. She is known to us as the first Asian woman to be ordained a priest. As the first, she represents to Asian women the promise and possibilities of God working in us and through us, even as we struggle against racism and sexism in the world, and in the church. I wonder if Li Tim-Oi sought to be ordained a priest in order to become the first Asian woman priest — I doubt it. It is much more likely that she sought to fulfill a call from God, that her ordination lifted up her gifts, unique and desperately needed to accomplish God’s purposes on the island of Macao and beyond. Being the first brings with it the projections and assumptions of others. Being the first also brings a sense of duty and responsibility. But one can be easily distracted and misled by this without a sure and certain clarity about one’s identity. As the world sees us, yes, but even more as we are formed as Christ’s own forever. Not long after my ordination to the priesthood, amid the buzz about me being the first Japanese-American woman priest, my mother was approached by a well-meaning

Episcopalian who suggested that my work in the Japanese and Asian-American part of the church was assumed. With grace and honesty, my mother responded “she will find her way in her ministry as she is called.” She knew the danger of any identity that made one’s world smaller rather than larger. The power of one’s incarnate identity finds its culmination in the ultimate identity as God’s beloved. It is not enough to be simply defined by our specificity. Responding to God’s call requires that we present ourselves, fully embodied, to do God’s will. In this response, we cooperate in being formed more and more to reflect God in the world. To see God in Li Tim Oi is to understand that women of Asian are part of the diversity pulled up from the divine net and offered to Christ for the building up of God’s realm. And to understand the truth and the fullness of God’s design in this way is to know that the reflection of God in the face of Li Tim-Oi is for anyone; not only asian women—anyone who has eyes to see. Today the church is changing as a world changes with it, around it. It will be important for us, the church, to discern faithfully in these times; because change represents opportunity to some, and chaos to others. Let the church pay attention—the chaos of fear will tempt us to retreat to what is comfortable, to seek out those who behave and look like us. Our call as the church is to continue to listen to Jesus, to be attuned to the sound of his calm and strong instruction. Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch. To know this to be a call to go out into the deep waters where fear of chaos is highest, and to drop into the depths our nets, empty but for faith, hope, and obedience, and to trust beyond all practical wisdom that God’s miraculous design will be revealed in the abundance brought up from the depths of the unknown. The disciples did not sort their enormous catch; they hauled it all in, their nets nearly breaking from the abundant catch. Fish of all sizes and shapes, colors and stripes were brought to the shore. May we the church boldly cast our nets into the deep waters, and like the fishermen’s nets embrace this abundant diversity as we present all to Christ. Let us praise God who was revealed through the faithful servants like the Rev. Li Tim-Oi, and let us heed the words from Ephesians “now to him who by the power at work within us, is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine; to God be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.”

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The First Reading for Evening Prayer *(Mark 4:35-41)*

Reader A reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And waking up, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Be silent! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Second Reading for Evening Prayer

A Reading from a treatise On Contemplating God by William of St Thierry

I who long for you, O Lord adorable and loveable, am at once confronted with the qualities that make you loveable; for from heaven and earth alike and by means of all your creatures these present themselves to me and urge me to attend to them. And the more clearly and truly these things declare you and affirm that you are worthy to be loved, the more ardently desirable do they make you appear to me. But alas! This experience is not one to be enjoyed with unmitigated pleasure and delight; rather, it is one of yearnings, strivings, and frustration, though not a torment without some sweetness. For just as the offerings I make to you do not suffice to please you perfectly unless I offer you myself along with them, so the contemplation of your manifold perfections, though it does give us a measure of refreshment, does not satisfy us unless we have yourself along with it. Into this contemplation my soul puts all its energies; in the course of it I push my spirit around like a rasping broom. And, using those qualities of yours that make you loveable like hands and feet on which

to lift my weight, with all my powers I reach up to you, to you who are Love supreme and sovereign Good. But the more I reach up, the more relentlessly am I thrust back, and down into myself, below myself. So I look at myself, and size myself up, and pass judgement on myself. And there I am, facing myself, a very troublesome and trying business. And yet, O Lord, when all is said and done, I am quite positive that, by your grace, I do have in me the desire to desire you and the love of loving you with all my heart and soul. So, when my inward eyes grow blurred like this, and become dim and blind, I pray you with all speed to open them, not as Adam's fleshly eyes were opened to the beholding of his shame, but that I, Lord, may so see your glory that, forgetting all about my poverty and littleness, my whole self may stand erect and run into your love's embrace, seeing you whom I have loved and loving you whom I have yet to see. In this way, dying to myself, I shall begin to live in you.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

The Collects

Florence Li Tim-Oi (*from Lesser Feasts and Fasts*)

Almighty God, who pours out your Spirit upon your sons and daughters: Grant that we, following the example of your servant Florence Li Tim-Oi, chosen priest in your church, may with faithfulness, patience, and tenacity proclaim your holy gospel to all the nations, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*



1 By all your saints still striv - ing, for all your saints at rest,
2 *(Insert the stanza appropriate to the day)*
3 Then let us praise the Fa - ther and wor - ship God the Son



your ho - ly Name, O Je - sus, for ev - er - more be blessed.
and sing to God the Spi - rit, e - ter - nal Three in One,



You rose, our King vic - to - rious, that they might wear the crown
till all the ran - somed num - ber who stand be - fore the throne



and ev - er shine in splen - dor re - flect - ed from your throne.
a - scribe all power and glo - ry and praise to God a - lone.

Conversion of Saint Paul *January 25*

Praise for the light from heaven
and for the voice of awe,
praise for the glorious vision
the persecutor saw.

O Lord, for Paul's conversion,
we bless your Name today.

Come shine within our darkness
and guide us in the Way.



Sat, Jan 25 | THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE

Saturday of the Second Week after Epiphany

Introduction

Paul, or Saul as he was known until he became a Christian, was a Roman citizen, born at Tarsus, in present-day Turkey. He was brought up as an observant Jew, studying in Jerusalem for a time under Gamaliel, the most famous rabbi of the day. Describing himself, he said, "I am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin" (Romans 11:1). A few years after the death of Jesus, Saul came in contact with the new Christian movement, and became one of the most fanatical of those who were determined to stamp out this "dangerous heresy." Saul witnessed the stoning of Stephen and approved of it. He was on the way to Damascus to lead in further persecution of the Christians when his dramatic conversion took place. From that day, Paul devoted his life totally to Christ, and especially to the conversion of Gentiles. The Acts of the Apostles describes the courage and determination with which he planted Christian congregations over a large area of the land bordering the eastern Mediterranean. His letters, which are the earliest Christian writings, established him as one of the early founders of Christian theology. He writes, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Paul describes himself as small and insignificant in appearance: "His letters are weighty and strong," it was said of him, "but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account" (2 Corinthians 10:10). He writes of having a disability or affliction which he had prayed God to remove from him, and quotes the Lord's reply, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, Paul went on to say, "I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul is believed to have been martyred at Rome in the year 64 under Nero. The feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul marks the end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Opening & Invitatory

In Morning Prayer, Use the Saint's Day Opening Sentence (bottom of pg. 77) & the Venite (pg. 82) with the Saint's Day Antiphon (pg. 82)

In Evening Prayer, sing or read the hymn on the previous page in place of the Phos Hilaron (the hymn is #231 in the 1982 Hymnal)

The Psalter

In Morning Prayer, Psalm 19 (BCP pg. 606)

In Evening Prayer, Psalm 119:89–112 (BCP pg. 770)

The First Reading for Morning Prayer (*Isaiah 45:18–25*)

Reader A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos; he formed it to be inhabited!): I am the Lord, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, "Seek me in chaos." I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right. Assemble yourselves and come together; draw near, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge— those who carry about their wooden idols and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. Declare and present your case; take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? There is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is no one besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; all who were incensed against him shall come to him and be ashamed. In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

[Use Canticle 16 (BCP pg. 92) as the canticle]

The Second Reading for Morning Prayer (*Philippians 3:4b-11*)

Reader A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians

even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

[Use Canticle 21 (BCP pg. 95) as the second canticle]

The Third Reading for Morning Prayer

A Reading from a homily 'In Praise of Saint Paul' by John Chrysostom

Paul, more than anyone else, shows us what humanity really is, in what our nobility consists, and of what virtue this particular animal is capable. Each day Paul aimed ever higher; each day he rose up with greater ardour and faced with new eagerness the dangers that threatened him. He summed up his attitude in the words: 'I forget what is behind me and push on to what lies ahead.' When he saw death imminent, he bade others share his joy: 'Rejoice and be glad with me.' And when danger, injustice and abuse threatened, he said: 'I am content with weakness, mistreatment and persecution.' These he called the weapons of righteousness, thus telling us that he derived immense profit from them. Thus, amid the traps set for him by his enemies, with exultant heart he turned their every attack into a victory for himself; constantly beaten, abused and cursed,

he boasted of it as though he were celebrating a triumphal procession and taking trophies home, and offered thanks to God for it all: 'Thanks be to God who is always victorious in us!' This is why he was far more eager for the shameful abuse that his zeal in preaching brought upon him than we are for the most pleasing honours, more eager for death than we are for life, for poverty than we are for wealth; he yearned for toil far more than others yearn for rest after toil. The one thing he feared, indeed dreaded, was to offend God; nothing else could sway him. Therefore, the only thing he really wanted was always to please God. The most important thing of all to Paul, however, was that he knew himself to be loved by Christ. Enjoying this love, he considered himself happier than anyone else; were he without it, it would be no satisfaction to be the friend of principalities and powers. He preferred to be loved and be the least of all, or even to be among the damned, than be without that love and be among the great and honoured. To be separated from that love was, in his eyes, the greatest and most extraordinary of torments; the pain of that loss would alone have been hell, and endless, unbearable torture. So too, in being loved by Christ he thought of himself as possessing life, the world, the angels, present and future, the kingdom, the promise and countless blessings. Apart from that love nothing saddened or delighted him; for nothing earthly did he regard as bitter or sweet. Paul set no store by the things that fill our visible world, any more than one sets value on the withered grass of the field. As for tyrannical rulers or the people enraged against him, he paid them no more heed than gnats. Death itself and pain and whatever torments might come were but child's play to Paul, provided that thereby he might bear some burden for the sake of Christ. I urge you, therefore, not only to admire, but also to follow his example of virtue. For in this way we will be able to share in the same crown of glory.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

[Use Suffrage B for the Prayers]

The First Reading for Evening Prayer (*Sirach 39:1-10*)

Reader A reading from the book of Sirach

They seek out the wisdom of all the ancients and are concerned with prophecies; they preserve the sayings of the famous and penetrate the subtleties of parables; they seek out the hidden meanings of proverbs and are at home with the obscurities of parables. They serve among the great and appear before rulers; they travel in foreign nations and learn what is good and evil in the human lot. They set their hearts to rise early to seek the Lord who made them and to petition the Most High; they open their mouths in prayer and ask pardon for their sins. If the great Lord is willing, they will be filled with the spirit of understanding; they will pour forth words of wisdom of their own and give thanks to the Lord in prayer. The Lord will direct their counsel and knowledge as they meditate on his mysteries. They will show the discipline of their training and will glory in the law of the Lord's covenant. Many will praise their understanding; it will never be blotted out. Their memory will not disappear, and their names will live through all generations. Nations will speak of their wisdom, and the congregation will proclaim their praise.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

[Use the Magnificat (pg. 119) as the canticle]

The Second Reading for Evening Prayer *(Acts 9:1-22)*

Reader A reading from the book of Acts

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight and

neither ate nor drank. Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." All who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

[Use the Nunc Dimittis (pg. 120) as the canticle]

The Third Reading for Evening Prayer

A Reading from a sermon of Augustine

Today we heard in our reading from the Acts of the Apostles how the apostle Paul from being a persecutor of Christians, became the great preacher of Christ. The encouragement we draw from his conversion, to which he himself testifies in his letters – indeed, he says, it was for this reason that he was

pardoned by God for his sins, for the rage and violence with which he had dragged Christians to their death, for the way he became an agent of the fury of the Jews, not only in the stoning of the holy martyr Stephen but in delivering up and bringing many for punishment – is that none of us should ever despair of ourselves. Even if, like Paul, we have committed terrible sins, become ensnared in great crimes, we should never think ourselves beyond the reach of Christ's pardon who, hanging on the cross, prayed for his persecutors, saying: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' From a persecutor Paul was changed into a preacher and teacher of the nations. As he says when writing to Timothy, 'I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence: but I received mercy so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life.' For by the grace of God we are healed of our sins in which we lay languishing. The medicine which heals our souls is God's alone because though the soul can wound itself, it is unable to heal itself. With regard to our bodies, though it lies within our power to let ourselves become ill, it is not equally within our power to recover. If we push ourselves too hard or live self-indulgently, if we pursue a lifestyle incompatible with good health and abuse our bodies, one day we will fall ill and not be able to recover our health. In such circumstances we call for the help of a doctor. So also with the soul. That we should fall into sin that leads to death, exchanging mortality for immortality, allowing ourselves to be seduced by the devil, was all within our power. But healing is the prerogative of God alone. It is to the afflicted and troubled that Christ the doctor comes, saying: 'The healthy have no need of the doctor, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.' Christ is calling sinners to peace, he is calling the sick to health.

Reader Here ends the lesson.

[Use Suffrage B for the Prayers]

The Collects

The Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle (*from the Book of Common Prayer, pg. 238*)

O God, who by the preaching of your apostle Paul has caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world: Grant, we pray, that we, having his

wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show ourselves thankful to you by following his holy teaching; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH